

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please withdraw Claim 4. Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8-12 remain as previously pending. Please amend Claims 1 and 13 as follows. Please cancel claims 15, 16 and 17. Please add new claims 19-24.

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus adapted for cutting holes in a body vessel or hollow organ comprising:

a shaft, wherein the shaft has a longitudinal axis;

a cutting blade;

a controlled force to advance the cutting blade along the longitudinal axis of the shaft; and

an anvil having a ~~proximal~~ surface against which the cutting blade is advanced, wherein the surface of the anvil is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the shaft, wherein the anvil is at least as wide as a largest exterior diameter of the cutting blade, and wherein the cutting blade does not pass beyond the ~~proximal~~ surface of the anvil;

wherein the cutting blade rotates relative to the anvil while the cutting blade is being advanced toward the anvil.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said controlled force on the cutting blade is generated by a spring with a pre-determined or selected spring constant.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said controlled force on the cutting blade is generated by a jackscrew with a knob for manual advance of said cutting blade.

4. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said controlled force on the cutting blade is generated by a hydraulic cylinder and hydraulic pressure supply.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said controlled force on the cutting blade is generated by a jackscrew and an electric motor to advance the blade.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said anvil is fabricated from a polymeric material.

7. Cancelled

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said apparatus comprises a tapered tip or trocar to promote tissue penetration.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said tapered tip or trocar includes axially disposed ridges to assist with tissue penetration.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said axially disposed ridges are sharp enough to cut tissue.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said axially disposed ridges are blunted.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said anvil and said tapered tip or trocar are fabricated from the same piece of material.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for creating a hole in a hollow organ or body vessel comprising the steps of:

creating an incision in said hollow organ or body vessel with a sharp object;

advancing a tapered trocar through said hollow organ or body vessel at the incision site until the trocar point has completely penetrated said hollow organ or body vessel;

locating a cutting blade having a longitudinal axis coaxially disposed about said trocar so that said cutting blade is positioned correctly;

advancing said cutting blade into said hollow organ or body vessel under controlled force until said cutting blade fully rests against a blunt surface ~~or of an~~ anvil whose outside diameter is ~~no less than~~ greater than or equal to the an outer diameter of said cutting blade, wherein the blunt surface of the anvil is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the cutting blade, and wherein a leading edge of the cutting blade does not pass beyond the blunt surface of the anvil;

~~removing said cutting blade and excised tissue from the hollow organ or body vessel; and~~

rotating the cutting blade while said cutting blade is being advanced toward said anvil; and

removing said cutting blade and excised tissue from the hollow organ or body vessel.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)
16. (Cancelled)
17. (Cancelled)
18. (Cancelled)
19. (New) A punch adapted for creating holes in a body organ or vessel comprising:

a shaft with a proximal end and a distal end;

a knob affixed at or near the proximal end of the shaft;

an anvil affixed at or near the distal end of the shaft, the anvil having a proximal surface which faces the cutter and a distal surface which faces away from the cutter;

C4 a cutter slidably disposed between said knob and said anvil, wherein the outer diameter of said cutter is less than the outer diameter of said anvil;

a controlled force to bias the cutter toward said anvil; and

a mechanism to rotate said cutter, wherein the cutter rotates relative to the anvil while the cutter is being advanced toward the anvil, wherein the cutter is advanced against, but not beyond, the proximal surface of the anvil.

20. (New) The punch of claim 19 further comprising holes in the cutter, wherein said holes vent trapped air.

21. (New) The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of providing holes in the cutter to vent air trapped within said cutter.

22. (New) The punch of claim 19 wherein the controlled force biases the anvil toward the cutter.

23. (New) The punch of claim 22 wherein the controlled force is generated by a jackscrew to move the anvil against the cutter.

24. (New) The punch of claim 22 wherein the controlled force is generated by a spring biased to move the anvil against the cutter.